

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 13, 2000

John H. Thompson  
Associate Director for Decennial Census  
Bureau of the Census  
Suitland and Silver Hill Roads  
Building 2, Room 3586  
Suitland, MD 20233

Dear Mr. Thompson:

As Members of Congress representing California, we are very interested in making sure that the Census 2000 is fair and accurate. We are writing in response to the "Request for Comments on the Proposed Rule" published in the Federal Register on June 20, 2000 by the Secretary of Commerce regarding the procedure for release of the corrected data file for Census 2000.

Many federal grant programs use formulas that rely, in whole or in part, on population data and other socio-economic characteristics collected in the census, for the distribution of funds. Local service providers working in low-income communities often rely on census data to identify the needs of residents and apply for funding to develop effective solutions. If the census count is not accurate, we cannot allocate those funds properly or fairly, or ensure that families and persons in need receive necessary services.

Since 1940, when the Census Bureau first measured accuracy with scientific tools, the census has systematically missed racial minorities at a far higher rate than the rest of the population. As evaluation methods became more sophisticated over time, we also learned that the census misses a disproportionate number of children. In 1990, children accounted for more than half of the net undercount. We should not allow such a bias in the Constitutionally-mandated enumeration to persist if there are well-researched methods to address the problem.

Fortunately, the Census Bureau has worked hard to develop and refine, over the course of many years, a scientific technique called Dual System Estimation, which uses a large sample of the population to evaluate coverage in the initial census count and correct measurable errors to produce more accurate and reliable population data. We applaud the Census Bureau's decision to supplement the raw census counts with this estimation process, based on advice from several panels convened by the National Academy of Sciences and from other knowledgeable scientific experts.

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It is imperative that all of our constituents are counted in the census. According to a Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) analysis commissioned by the U.S. Census Monitoring Board, more than one million Californians may not be counted in Census 2000 if patterns of undercounting are similar to those in the 1990 census, again placing California at risk of suffering the largest undercount of all the states. PwC estimates that California could lose over \$5 billion in federal formula funds between 2002-2012 if Census 2000 is not more accurate than the 1990 count. Ten of the top 25 counties that would sustain the largest funding loss as a result of a census undercount are in California, according to the analysis.

The Census 2000 plan incorporates statistical sampling methods that can rectify this situation and ensure that federal funds are directed where they are needed. We must let the Census Bureau do what it believes is right and fair to produce the most accurate and inclusive census possible.

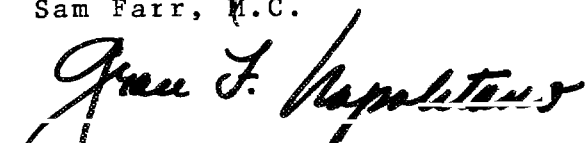
We agree with the Secretary of Commerce: the people most qualified to decide if the results of the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation survey will increase the accuracy of the census are a team of career professional staff from the Census Bureau. The team is made up of researchers and scientists who have spent years exploring the use of statistical methods to overcome the persistent differential undercount of certain population subgroups. Most assuredly, this complex and technical decision should be based solely on scientific considerations.

We fully support the Secretary of Commerce's proposal to set forth a fair and unbiased procedure for making such a vital decision – one that will affect the rights and opportunities of all Americans for the next decade. We support the proposed rule and urge its promulgation as a final rule.

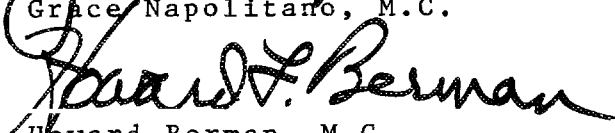
Sincerely,




Sam Farr, M.C.



Grace Napolitano, M.C.



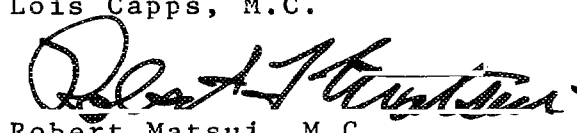
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Lois Capps, M.C.



Robert Matsui, M.C.

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